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THE ARTS OF TALKING AND LISTENING.

WHEN Miss Burney wrote her novels of Society at the close of the last century, she left it on record that the best conversation of her time was insufferably heavy and stately; but that at a lower level, there were some mysteries of fashionable intercourse which have not wholly disappeared even in our own time. The 'ton misses' she classed in two divisions—the Supercilious and the Voluble. The Supercilious gave other 'misses' short answers: 'No, ma'am'; 'Yes, ma'am'; 'Indeed, I don't know, ma'am'—with long spaces of silence between. The Voluble rattled away on every topic in a breath, from the misfortunes of her friends down to sweetest caps, beautifullest trimmings, and ribbons quite divine; and eked out her ideas with 'Infinite' and 'Prodigious,' in much the same way as even educated people in our own day use 'Awfully' as an unmeaning sign of emphasis. As for 'the man of the ton,' he was still more disagreeable company; a *blasé* air was his characteristic; he was weary of everything, and went to the Oxford Street Pantheon to tell the world his weariness of its music, its talk, and its tea-cups; and his conversation consisted of careless questions, and listless remarks lost in yawns and reveries—like very shallow sand-streams.

After that Georgian era came a period of activity of printed teaching with regard to manners and conversation, when the art of social success was explained, for one shilling or less, in red-and-gilt primers. The little books have shut up and vanished in despair. They found out—better late than never—that they were classed with quack medicines and guides for multiplying commercial capital; and into the Hades of quackery they disappeared. The 'shining in society,' which they professed to teach, is in these days far too dependent upon tangible gold, the recipe for making which was not in the etiquette books. 'Put money in thy purse,' would save many chapters in a new Society primer. But as to the Art of Polite Conversation, which they also professed to know thoroughly, and be able to explain

to all buyers, it certainly ought to be independent of money advantages; yet it is an art that can only be taught in the same sense in which duty or cheerfulness, or any other impalpable reality can be said to be taught—that is, by spirit and precept, rather than by rule.

If we reflect upon the nature of pleasant conversation, there will readily come to mind certain qualities which it ought to possess, and which can be summed up in a few words. It ought to be, in manner natural, lively, and distinct; and the quantity ought to be moderate, for of all monopolies, monopoly of talk is the least endurable. In the matter—which is, of course, far more important than the manner—there should be variety, mutual interest, sympathy, simplicity, candour. Something to talk about, seems to be the great difficulty of talkers. Weather-talk is the refuge of us northerners, favoured by our changeable northern weather; but it is as passing and shapeless as a rain-cloud. Another refuge is to talk of somebody else. As Thackeray says, what would Society do, if it could not talk about the lady who has just gone out at the door? Yet, it is very hard to talk constantly of other people without the sharp remarks that would be cruel if they could be heard; for even very small criticisms are often cruel, as we all know by chance experience; and true hospitality ought not to be able to brook a slighting word of those whom it receives, just as honest friendship refuses to admit even the unkind thought which it would not dare to turn to words within hearing of the friend. A third refuge in dearth of conversation is mutual inquiry, and sympathy carried to a superlative degree, far beyond the bounds of possible sincerity. Mr Punch, who is always among us taking notes, once overheard some of this style of fashionable conversation, and treacherously published his eaves-droppings: 'Going to Lady Such-a-one's?'—'Ya-as!'—'So glad!'—'So glad you're glad!'—'So glad you're glad I'm glad!'

The truth is, that pleasant and interesting conversation depends far more upon sincerity and simplicity and absence of self-consciousness, than

upon any natural gifts or studied effort. When there is no self-consciousness to keep the mind centred in self, either with stagnant vanity of satisfaction, or anxiety as to the impression the all-sufficient self is producing, then there is scope for brightness of thought and quickness of expression. Then comes simplicity, as pre-eminently the greatest charm of any talker, as affectation is the greatest blemish; and with it, too, comes the sympathy of affection or interest. This sympathy is worse than worthless unless it be sincere; it is the sincere desire for information, or for exchanging impressions, that makes pleasant conversation out of commonplace talk. We often feel that people are 'uninteresting to talk to,' when the fault is ours, in selfishly wishing to speak of our special subjects, forgetting that the lives and tastes of others are worth knowing, and different from our own. Scott was wont to say that he had never spoken with any one, even a chance acquaintance in a stage-coach, without hearing something new and worth remembering. The secret of his finding interest everywhere was, undoubtedly, that he himself was a sympathetic talker, more anxious to give a good lead for the other than for himself. The talker who is not sympathetic is always in danger of depriving conversation of its variety; and if he have physical energy enough, he will keep the talk of any number of people to one subject, and that his own.

The conversation ought to be, rightly, the linking together in a larger and slower chain all the many chains of thought of the separate speakers. To hold it long to one subject—unless it be a subject of special interest to the company—is to tie a huge knot in this combined chain, and fasten every one's thoughts there. This feat is generally accomplished by that fearful and wonderful outgrowth of Society known as a Bore. There is no need to describe this terrible being, who is as thoroughly good-natured, faultless, and innocuous in his own self, as he is afflicting to his friends. It is enough to state that the Bore is eminently respectable, often learned, indefatigable, unobservant, and all-absorbing in conversation. Even in fiction, this dreadful but blameless character has never been described; it has to be taken on faith that this man, or that, was a Bore; to develop the character would be to bore the reader.

There are various wise saws that advise unsociable silence to the possessors of tongues. We are all familiar with, 'Speech is silver, but silence is golden;' and fortunately, most of us are of opinion that the saying only holds good for such unhappy occasions as quarrels and the misfortunes of our friends. Other epigrams point to silence as a mask for ignorance, or a discreet stopper to be put upon the dangers of a little knowledge. One imitated from the Greek of Palladas advises:

If you, my foolish friend, by chance 'mid learned wights are flung,
To seem a sage, you only need—Do what? Why,
hold your tongue!

But though the following of this sarcastic advice would be clever, the foolish friend would be more honourable, as well as better company if he tried to learn something from the learned wights. Dull company would indeed be plentiful, if the golden-silence proverbs did not find human tongues too strong for them; and the silence that exists—that

is, not the listening, but the stolid listless silence—is often a mark of duller metal rather than of gold. 'Comprehensive talkers,' says George Eliot—one of the most observant of talkers or listeners—are apt to be tiresome when we are not athirst for information; but, to be quite fair, we must admit that superior reticence is a good deal due to the lack of matter. Speech is often barren; but silence also does not necessarily brood over a full nest. Your still fowl, blinking at you without remark, may all the while be sitting on one addled nest-egg; and when it takes to cackling, will have nothing to announce but that addled delusion.

But to return from the subject of silence to our own province, which is not the art of silence, but of speech: there have been—and there are still—some brilliant talkers who seized the talk as a monopoly, but who neither kept it upon one subject, nor in any sense bored their friends; and this because, by exceptional wit or wisdom, they could not help but talk, and talk well, so that it was good fortune to listen, and impossible to wrest from them the attention of others. Talent, as Lord Lytton well said, does only what it can; but Genius what it *must*. And many a man has been a genius of conversation in the circles of his friends. It was true of Macaulay that few others got a hearing when he was present. His vast resources of knowledge made his conversation sound like a versatile never-ending book; and his memory being of almost incredible power and precision, no one was able to record his table-talk, for it would have needed such another memory as his. A great critic of those days called him the troubadour of dining-rooms, rich in narrative, charming the company with noble speech, but neither witty, like Jerrold; nor humorous, like Sydney Smith; nor poetical, like Moore; nor dreamy, like Coleridge. Sydney Smith, who often sat at the same board with the talkative historian, was quite as voluble, with less of information, but more of wit. 'We both talk a great deal,' he himself once acknowledged, with a laugh; 'but I don't believe Macaulay ever did hear my voice. Sometimes, when I have told a good story, I have thought to myself: "Poor Macaulay! he will be very sorry some day to have missed hearing that!"'

From Sydney Smith's bit of pleasantry, it is clear that Macaulay, like many other great talkers, was a bad listener. If few can equal him in talking, all can excel him in listening; and there are few social arts more truly kind, attractive, and winning, as well as more really valuable, than that of being a perfect listener. A perfect listener is not one who feigns interest, and is secretly indifferent. Unreal interest is always transparent. We detect the fraud in the tone of the interjections; and if interest were true, and the listener alive to the conversation, interjections would give place to words of comment or inquiry. Interjections are, in fact, disappearing from good conversation; and they are always rare in the speech of the quick-witted and educated, amongst whom they are not needed as substitutes for ideas. It is said that women have more social success than men, because they are better listeners; but, for ourselves, we are afraid fair listeners deal largely in unreal interest, and betray their want of true pleasure by a want of resource in following

the speaker's side-courses of thought. At the same time, we must admit that many conversations are hopelessly uninteresting, except to the one that is the leading speaker; and then we yield the palm to women for their tact in turning the talk. It is too often forgotten that there is a pleasure in speaking, and that we need not fear to appear dull if we leave most of the conversation to those whom we desire to entertain. It was said of the late Emperor of the French, when his career was sifted, and his life analysed by public opinion after its sudden close, that he owed a large part of his success, socially and as a diplomatist, to his habit, not of being a good talker, but of being an excellent listener.

Talking and listening, with their immense stores of pleasure, are the easiest of all acquirements, if a kindly genial spirit and the candour of nature take the place of self-exaltation and studied rules and forms. We are speaking, of course, not of Macaulays, Coleridges, and Sydney Smiths, but of ordinary mortals, who have it in their power to swell the common property of cheerfulness, simple wisdom, and true judgment. And as we believe that not only charity but every other good thing should begin at home, we protest against the too ordinary mistake of thinking any talk good enough for 'among ourselves at home'—anything good enough for the one spot in the world that we can most easily brighten, and the one circle that is most dependent upon us. It is true that there is an air of familiar rest and ownership in the very silence of home-rooms; there is no need there to keep talk going. We like to be at work or to recreate ourselves in our own way, just conscious of the restful presence of those who are dearest to us. When Charlotte Brontë, always sorely tried and weary, was residing at the Belgian school, there was one of her true touches of observation in her noting it as a home-like pleasure, that she was not expected to converse all through the evening, but might be silent as long as she liked. But at home, as well as everywhere else, there is a time to speak as well as a time to be silent; and bright gaiety of conversation, or even a pleasant way of saying what has to be said, lightens many a load for those who have burdens of anxiety to bear.

It is also to be regretted that in another way home talk is neglected. There is a false shame, or a bond of cold custom, that holds back expressions of the gratitude, trust, or affection which the heart really feels. Often beside a deathbed, the bygone years may be bitterly counted up, wherein was sedulously hidden the tenderness in little words and deeds, which might have comforted the whole course of the life now ending; or, all too late, when the grave is closed, truth rushes out in a torrent of love, where love, but half realised before, shrank from transforming itself daily into those little deeds and passing words, which are, after all, the trifles making up the sum of a service of love that is not little. The candour of true friendship is a better thing to make habitual than any brilliance of speech; indeed, mere cleverness of speech is not what we are advocating in commending as a neglected study good talking and listening. Those who are ambitious of the distinctions of wit and brilliance, must seek elsewhere for hints. They may find plenty in the records of the old court of

France and the *salons* during the monarchy—probably the place and period in which extreme polish of witty conversation was most widely cultivated. Even a boy-king, at that time, did not disdain to converse daily for an hour with Madame de Choisy, that he might acquire the art of repartee without which a gentleman would be incomplete. But there are many more profitable studies than that of conversational turns and sharp answers; and tyros in the art ought to be warned by the example of the hero of *Happy Thoughts*, ambitiously attempting to make his dictionary of repartees, beginning with an Abbé and an Abbot, and hoping in time to know what to say to a Fakir, a Footman, and a Fool.

MY LAST DETECTIVE CASE.

CHAPTER III.

It was late when I got home; but Mr Hellip was still up, which was not usual with him; so, hearing me enter, he invited me to step into his room. He explained that having had a long nap in the evening, he could not hope to go to sleep, but was quite glad that it had happened so, as he wished to congratulate me on my success. I was astonished at such a remark, and asked him his reason for saying so.

'Only that everybody was talking about it in the omnibus to-day,' he replied; 'at least three or four persons said the Upper Broughton Street mystery was likely to be cleared up. I felt quite proud to hear the way in which they all spoke of my friend Mr Nickham.'

'I don't want to be rude, Mr Hellip,' I said; 'but your acquaintances in the omnibus had no more sense than your friend Mr Nickham, and I begin to think he is a perfect flat.'

'Why, you don't mean to say that you have not found a clew?' exclaimed Mr Hellip. 'Surely such a man as yourself!'

'Oh, that will do,' I said, interrupting him; 'we will not have any compliments until they are deserved.' With this, I left him rather abruptly; for I was anything but pleased at his language; I felt as though I could not tell whether he was in earnest or bantering me. I believe I have mentioned before that I was not particularly intimate with Mr Hellip, and his joking did not seem to me to be at all in good taste.

I and others before me had tried various schemes, which came to nothing, to trace out the Upper Broughton Street mystery; but I have not troubled the reader with any particulars of these failures. I never knew our Force at such a loss; none of our men seemed to have an idea in their heads; every hint they gave me was absurd or worn out. I should think if I was advised once to look after little Mr and Mrs Brake, or to arrest the poor old housekeeper with her son Bill Jenkins, I was urged to do so five-and-twenty times.

Bearing in mind the description given by Jenkins of the visitor at Daryett's, I got into the habit of staring into the face of every one I met in the streets or sat opposite to in an omnibus, to see if I could trace any resemblance to the face and figure I had conjured up in my mind. Twice—although I am almost ashamed to confess it—I positively followed what turned out to be very respectable people, because they looked a little like this man.

One proved to be a Quaker, in a large way of business at the West End; while the other lived at Richmond, and I actually went all the way there with him, merely to find that he was a gentleman of private fortune, who had dwelt there for forty years. I merely tell this to show how ready I was to be impressed by such a story as Jenkins told me.

I have said that I always made a friend and adviser of Mrs Nickham, and never did I slight her advice without being sorry for it. Now, on this night when I got home, late as it was, there was my supper ready to the minute. She had a wonderful way of managing in that respect, and she was sitting by the little fire—for the evenings had grown chilly now—working as usual. There had been a small rain falling as I came home, and I was rather uncomfortable; so she chatted until I had eaten my bit of supper and was sitting in my dry slippers, my pipe lighted, and my cold whisky-and-water at my elbow, so that I began to feel all right; then she changed the conversation by saying: 'You have been very careful, I suppose, Dick, not to mention what steps you have taken to any one, especially about this spiritualist business?'

'To be sure I have, my dear,' I answered. 'It is bad enough to know ourselves what a fool I have been, without letting all the world know.'

'Not even your inspector?' she went on.

'The last person in the world!' I said. 'To tell him would be like proclaiming it at Charing Cross.'

Mrs Nickham went on with her work again; but I know her way—of course I do—and I was quite aware she had something more to say. 'I suppose you have not told Mr Hellip that you have been to a spiritualist?' she resumed, after a pause; and I said 'No!' to this as energetically as to the other question.

'You are quite certain he knows nothing about it? May you not have dropped a few words before him, that?'

'Nothing of the kind,' I interrupted—'nothing of the kind, Jane. Mr Hellip has had a great deal too much to say about this business; and what with his jokes and his compliments, I have scarcely been able to be civil to him.'

'Well, Dick,' said my wife, changing her tone again, 'what are you going to do about your friend Charley's appointment?'

This led to a very interesting discussion; the result of which was that we both agreed I should arrange with Charley for my attending the meeting of the next night, unknown to the visitor. I thought she had intended to say something quite different from this; but knowing she always had a reason for what she did, I took no notice.

I met my friend Charley at the *Two Gridirons*, as appointed, when I told him what I intended to do, and what assistance I wanted from him. He could not promise all I asked; so I had to go with him to see the principal. I found this was a very decent old gentleman, who, when he heard my business, was quite willing to assist all he could, until he found I wanted to arrange the answers which were to be given to the visitor. He fairly puzzled me then. He declared that it was wicked and sinful to pretend to have revelations and visions which did not exist. Why, bother it! I thought it was just by doing this

that he and his mates got their living. I had to take very high ground, and point out what an awful crime had been committed, and what a responsibility would rest upon his conscience if he refused to assist me, before he consented. It was but little I wanted done, after all; it was only to lead to further questions on the part of the visitor; and if there was no harm in his inquiries, he could not come to any harm through them, that was plain.

I left home a good while before the time fixed for the interview, which was eight o'clock, as I had to dress and disguise myself before attending the meeting. I took the materials with me in a bag; and by the time I had put on an old dressing-gown which the principal lent me, and with the assistance of Charley, had made myself up with a white-gray wig, white whiskers, some extra lines about my face, and a pair of spectacles, I don't believe any London prig would have known me. So long as I didn't speak, I might have passed for anybody but myself with the sharpest of them, and I reckon the London thieves are as quick a lot as any in the world. The experiment was to come off in the front parlour, which opened with folding-doors into the back-room, and in this latter I was to be sitting at a table as if I was writing. I was placed so that the visitor would be in full view; while, as the only light in my room was behind me, I was comparatively in the shade, and ran but little danger of being discovered.

Punctually at eight o'clock there came a knock at the street-door.

'Here he is!' said Charley; and I went to my seat.

'Mr Nickham,' said the principal hurriedly, 'I am lending myself and my lofty science to deceit. I am not at ease in doing so; and I hope you will always remember that it is only for the sake of justice and to clear the innocent, I have done so.'

There was no time for him to say any more, or for me to make any promises, for the room-door opened and the stranger entered. He took off his hat, and nodded with an easy swagger, first to one, then to the other, as if he had known the people for years. He either did not notice me at first, or thought I had not much to do with the business, so he did not trouble himself about me. But I saw him. By all that's wonderful, it was my lodger, Hellip! It was well for me that I was in the shade, that I wore spectacles, and was painted and made up; for if I had been as visible to him as he was to me, my stare and gasp must have betrayed me. For a few seconds I did not hear what he said, although he was talking rather loudly; I was so astonished at my blindness at not having recognised the description of the man whom I saw every day—a description so exact, that I ought to have identified him, as I now saw, if I had met him casually in the street. Now I understood all his artful inquiries, all his interest, and all his assumed good temper in speaking of the Upper Broughton Street mystery. He was the borrower! Aha! I saw the whole transaction clearly enough now. This mysterious sum of money which the accountant could not trace, must have been lent upon a bill accepted by this man. The bill was nearly due; Daryett had refused to renew—this was proved by an allusion in his book

as to what he intended to do with it—Hellip had killed him to get possession of the bill, and so to save himself.

All this flashed through my mind much quicker than it can here be read, and then—the first shock of surprise being over—I was as cool, and had all my wits about me as completely as when I first entered the house. At the same time, I was quite aware—no one better—that it was one thing to feel certain of any fact in our business—and I never felt more certain of anything than I did of this—and quite another to have legal proof of it, or to be justified in apprehending a man.

The séance—as I believe it is called—proceeded, Charley on this occasion only pretending to go into a trance, and in answer to the questions put to him by Hellip—of course through the principal, to keep up the delusion—he returned such answers, as arranged with me, as completely staggered my lodger. He did not say anything about a murder, or of Upper Broughton Street; he only wanted to find out something about a valuable paper which had been lost; but Charley in all his answers referred vaguely, yet unmistakably, to some dreadful crime in connection with the paper, so that Hellip was evidently troubled and alarmed. He varied his questions, endeavouring to get away from this ominous subject; but of course he could not succeed; and then the principal asked Hellip point-blank if the loss of the document was in any way connected with a murder. Hellip forced a hollow laugh, but, as I could see from where I sat, was forced to moisten his lips before he could reply. ‘Murder! Ha, ha! Not at all,’ he said at last. ‘The paper was lost, I expect, on a racecourse—I won’t trouble you with any more questions, thank you. I had no idea your power enabled you to go so far back. I am glad, however, that I came. Good-night, gentlemen.’ Saying this, he hurried off, leaving me quite convinced he was the man I wanted; while my companions, as I afterwards found, were greatly prejudiced against him.

‘I have aided you, sir,’ said the principal, ‘although not with much good-will. Yet the result has been so unfavourable to the man who has just left us, that I feel I was justified in doing so. By means which you do not understand, and would perhaps only ridicule if I explained them, I probed the man’s mind while he was here, and read his wishes, he not suspecting me. He is a bad man. Whether he has committed the crime you are investigating, or not, I cannot say; but in any case, he has so wicked and cruel a heart that I never wish to see him again.’

I agreed in the estimate of Hellip which the principal had formed; but bad as we might think him, we had no evidence yet upon which I could act; that was the unfortunate part of the case.

I went straight home to tell Mrs Nickham what had happened, and to think over the next best step to take. I let myself in with my latch-key, as, supposing Hellip to have reached home before me, I certainly was not desirous of seeing him before I had made up my mind. The best thing which had suggested itself to me during my ride home was to consult Mrs Brake, telling her my suspicions, and so ascertain if she could give me any tangible evidence.

Seeing a light in our front parlour, which was not often the case, I was about to step in there,

when Mrs Nickham, who had evidently heard me enter, opened the door of our usual sitting-room, which was at the back of the house, and called to me. I went at once to her; and as she carefully closed the door, I was struck by a certain excited, I may almost say wild look in her face, very different from her usual expression.

‘What is the matter, my dear?’ I began; but she put her finger to her lips, and I was silent directly.

‘Speak low, Dick,’ she whispered. ‘You can’t be too careful, for there is no knowing who may be listening at our very keyhole.’

‘Ah, Jenny, you are right there!’ I returned in the same tone; ‘although what makes you suspect anything or anybody, is more than I can understand. Go on.’

‘You must sit down and listen for a few minutes, Dick,’ she continued. ‘I have found out a great deal while you have been away. I can see by your look that you have something to tell me also; but you had better hear me out, Dick. You remember my asking you if you had ever told any one, and especially Mr Hellip, of your visits to the spiritualist? Well, when I asked you, I was quite certain, from some words he had dropped, that he *did* know you had been there. He did not mean me to see this, you may be sure, but I saw it at once. And then it at once flashed upon me that here was the very man who had been described to you—the same broad fleshy face, the same small, cunning, restless eyes, and the same fixed grin. I knew it; yet I did not like to tell my suspicions, especially as I had found something which I hoped might give me a fuller clew.’

‘Found something!’ I repeated. I was tremendously interested in my wife’s narrative, as you may guess.

‘Yes, Dick. It was only half a leaf of crumpled note-paper, which I picked up on the stairs,’ said Mrs Nickham; ‘on it was an address—“Mr Lawrence Jacobs, Stobble Street, Southwark.”’

‘Excuse the interruption, my dear!’ I exclaimed; ‘but I know old Jacobs. He calls himself a pawnbroker, as he certainly is; but he is also one of the most notorious receivers of stolen goods in London, yet so artful, that we have never been able to make anything of him. I beg your pardon, my dear—go on.’

‘On the back of this paper,’ continued my wife, ‘was scrawled: “DEAR VALLY—This party is all right; the wife had better go.—HOCKING.” Now, I knew Hellip’s Christian name was Valentine, so the paper was clearly for him; and I was confident that it was advice respecting getting rid of some of the stolen property by means of his wife. It, of course, occurred to me that this writing would be missed and looked for, and if not found, some suspicion might be excited, so I copied the writing, and dropped the leaf as nearly as possible where I had found it on the stairs. I was only just in time; for as I kept my eyes and ears open, I saw Mrs Hellip come down presently, look anxiously about, then pick up the paper, and hurry back to her room. Mr Hellip went out alone; but very soon after he had gone, Mrs Hellip went out also. There was no one in the house but Anne, so I told her to put the chain up; and having my bonnet and cloak ready, I slipped out after Mrs Hellip. I easily kept

her in sight until I saw her hail a Borough omnibus, into which she got. I was looking round for a cab, when who should come up but Long Joe—the cabman, you recollect, Dick, whom you spoke up for in the bad half-sovereign case?

I nodded. I remembered the case well enough, Long Joe would have had a twelvemonth certain, if I had not happened to have known something of him; but I did not interrupt my wife.

"Joe, I says," she went on, "I want to follow that omnibus to the Borough." "Right, mum," he says; "you shall follow it to Jericho, if my horse don't give out." Well, we kept it in sight till Mrs Hellip left it. I told Long Joe to wait for me; and I followed her into Stobble Street, as I expected.

"This is really growing interesting," I said; "but I beg your pardon, my dear."

"She went into the pawnbroker's—Jacobs was the name. I followed her," continued my wife—while I drew a long breath, as people do who are hearing an exciting story—"she entered one of the boxes; I entered the next, but kept at the back, determined she should be attended to first. A young man came up to her; but I heard her say that she must see Mr Jacobs himself; and then the master came. No one supposed there was anybody in my box, so the young man went to another part of the shop. There was a little muttering, and then I heard her say: "Twenty pounds; it is worth fifty." I stepped to the front, and looking boldly out, as though I had just come in, saw that she was handing him a watch, which I recognised from the description as the one stolen from Upper Broughton Street."

"My eye!" I exclaimed, quite involuntarily.

"The pawnbroker hastily scrambled it up, but not until I had seen all I wanted," resumed Mrs Nickham. "He scowled savagely at me; but I looked as innocent as a baby, so he thought it was all right, and called his young man to attend to me. Owing to the partition, Mrs Hellip, of course, could not see me from her box. The young man came, and—Would you believe it, Dick? I had not till that moment thought of what excuse I should make. I had to pawn something, and I offered the first thing I thought of. What do you think it was, Dick?"

"Why, you don't mean to say you had to bowl the hoop?" I replied. "To bowl the hoop" is to pawn the wedding-ring, and the term is generally understood in professional circles.

"That's just what I did!" exclaimed my wife. "He lent me five shillings on it, which I think was pretty fair."

"Quite liberal, my dear," I said. "But about Mrs Hellip?"

"Well, there is not much more about her," returned Mrs Nickham. "While the young fellow was making out the ticket and all that, I saw the master pass twenty sovereigns over to her; and then she went out. I got into Long Joe's cab again, and came home. Here is the ticket, Dick, and you must get the ring out to-morrow."

"All right, my dear," I replied. "But now you must hear what I have to say."

"Not yet," interrupted my wife; "there is just a little finish to my story. Did you notice a light in the front parlour?"

"I did."

"Well, then," she went on, "there is a friend of yours in there. You had better go and see who it is; and as Hellip is up-stairs having his supper, you may perhaps get an idea of what I think you ought to do."

PAVEMENT PORTRAITS.

A LIFE-GUARD.

LOOMING statuesquely obstructive, at the far end of the smaller division of the tunnel-like gateway into St James's Park at the Horse Guards, backed by a sort of white sheet of fog, hanging thick over the Park, this portrait, one dull November day, confronted me, as I turned from Whitehall to make my way to London's little *Champ de Mars*, embellished with its two captive cannon, and frowned down upon by the hideous chimney-like column of the Duke of York.

Very grand was the outline of this man of war—this life-guardsmen. Two long, strong, and straight limbs supported a well-knit, broad-shouldered body, surmounted by a proud and firm-set helmeted head, adorned with a nodding plume, which, from time to time, disturbed the murky air by reason of the conceited jerks and tosses of its owner. The figure looked black as I approached it along the before-mentioned little tunnel; but when I had, with some difficulty, passed the giant, and emerged into the comparative light of the Park, what a change I saw on looking round! The nodding plume was snowy white, the helmet was a glorious mixture of glittering brass and steel, and the scarlet tunic suggested flame and blood to my innocent civilian mind. The hands, encased in the whitest and wickedest-looking gauntlet gloves, seemed made and ready for deeds of daring; the thighs, displayed by the tightest buckskins into which man's nether limbs were ever forced, suggested strength enough for Mars himself; and the enormous jack-boots, with their great cruel spurs, conjured up visions of carnage and rapine.

"A valiant soldier. A man who's hired to kill his country's enemies." Such was this guardian outside the 'Abandon-hope' sort of gateway under a clock which never goes wrong, but somehow always seems to be 'on strike.' Albeit at the time of which I am speaking this soldier, 'armed with resolution,' was merely explaining to a thick-headed coachman, driving a sort of pill-box brougham, containing an old lady, that he could not drive through the middle archway, sacred to the carriages of the Court and Commander-in-chief. The driver was obstinate, and seemed to doubt the authority of the sentry; and I went near enough to hear the concluding words of that adamant guard: 'I beg your pardon, but my duty is to prevent carriages coming this way; it's no use, you *can't* get through; must go round the other way.' With that, the Guardsman took one stride and a half, and planted himself right in front of the lean Rosinante which was between the shafts; and I really thought, for a moment, that the poor quadruped would have gone on its knees before this blazing vision of scarlet and white; that the Jehu would get off his box and fly the scene;

and that the old lady inside, who up till now seemed to have been fast asleep, would wake up and scream. The incident ended mildly, however; for the driver pulled himself together, and turned the dejected horse round, and drove the pill-box off into the fog, and was no more seen.

This sentinel of six feet six smiled a haughty smile at me, as though seeking approbation of his successful defence of the sanctity of the carriage-way. Then he drew the ends of his moustache to the front of the brazen chain which lay along his chin, and said: 'Some people want a lot of talking to before they can be got to understand a simple regulation. I have to turn off no end of carriages from this gate; but even carriages-and-pair go away with fewer words than it took to explain to that *gardener* that he couldn't get through here.' Although there was ineffable scorn in the epithet 'gardener' which he applied to the unfortunate coachman, there was a good-natured twinkle in the soldier's eye as he spoke—a twinkle which prompted me to offer him a cigar.

'I'm much obliged, I'm sure, sir,' he said, as he took the proffered 'weed' and inserted it into the bosom of his tunic, between the third and fourth buttons from the top. 'I'll smoke this when I go off sentry. It'll be something to do.'

'I suppose you have a dull time of it when you are not on duty?' I said.

'Well, yes; there isn't much to do when we're down on this "Queen's guard." But I'm better off than most of the men in that respect, for I've got an occupation. I draw.'

'Draw!' I returned, surprised. 'What do you draw?'

'Oh, all sorts of things. Look here!' With that, the sentry strode to the side-walk, and pointed out to me some designs roughly scratched on the wall, representing, apparently, companions in arms. 'Those,' he said, 'are my work; but a sword-point isn't the best thing to draw with, and a stone wall is hard to work on. But I've lots of drawings, properly done in Indian-ink and water-colours, which I might perhaps have a chance to show you, if you like.'

I said I hoped to have an opportunity of seeing them some day, and with the expression of that hope, I moved away, praying for a quick subsidence of the uncomfortable sensation in the back of my neck caused by too long looking at the giddy height of that glittering helmet.

Some months after this first interview with my artist Life-guard, I was going along Oxford Street, at a time of the day when the pavement in front of Mr Peter Robinson's shop was thronged with people, ladies principally, all on the pleasant business of shopping bent; and it was difficult to make progress through the crowd of millinery and muslin worshippers between the end of Great Portland Street and Regent Circus. While carefully picking my way, so as to avoid, if possible, disturbing any of the fair idolaters, I became aware of a longer pair of legs than mine, whose every movement caused a jingle of spurs—awkward things in a crowd like this—evidently engaged in the same puzzling task of keeping free from entanglement with the daintily costumed multitude; and looking up, I saw the stone-wall-engraving sentry of St James's Park. He nodded familiarly as he caught sight of me, and made a sign with his head which looked like a

beckon, doubtfully given, as if fearful of his own familiarity.

I turned, and followed the red-jacketed giant into a public-house; and when once safely in the bar, I was saluted as follows: 'Well, how are you, sir? I didn't speak to you outside, for people look so when fellows as conspicuous as me fall talking to civilians, and I thought you wouldn't like it. But I've got some of my drawings here, and may be you'd like to see them. They're not the best I've done; but they're fair enough; and as you seemed to have some idea yourself as to what's what of this sort of thing, I thought that you wouldn't mind stopping a bit to see these specimens. No harm done, I hope?'

'Harm? No! What harm should there be?' I replied. 'I am glad to see you; and should like to look at the drawings you have.' I wondered, as I spoke, where the drawings were; for my companion was so tightly buttoned up in his scarlet jacket and blue, red-striped continuations, that I could not see how any drawings could be concealed about his person. However, he soon enlightened me, and pulled down from under his jacket a perfect breastplate of cartridge-paper in small square sheets, on each of which was, I found on examination, a really clever sketch. Most of the subjects were military, and of these the majority were imaginary incidents in the career of a Life-guardsmen. Maid-servants, masters, mistresses, policemen, street-boys, and Volunteer officers, were all treated in a humorous and spirited way; and some characters in an Irish play at the Adelphi, which the artist had lately seen, were wonderfully done.

While I was looking over the sketches, the Life-guard looked at them too, and the effect they produced upon him was curious and amusing to witness. He regarded his own work with undisguised admiration, expressed in a series of conceited attitudes, which spoke plainly as words his approbation. There was the pose of calm appreciation—bolt upright, legs close together, one arm akimbo, one hand stroking the moustache—as much as to say: 'Yes, that's mine, *all mine!*' that of interrogative wonder—body slightly bent, hands behind tapping his back with his riding-whip—as if asking: 'What do you think of *that*? Beat it if you can; and that of sympathy with his own wit—legs negligently crossed, one spur pointing upwards, and a languid leaning of his body against the bar, his closed mouth wreathed with smiles, as if moved to mirth at his incomparable funniness. These attitudes, as I have intimated, betokened great conceit in the man; but in such a splendid creature, conceit was no more out of place than pride is in a peacock when it spreads its tail.

As I have said, most of the subjects chosen were pertaining to the life of soldiers; and observing this, I said to my friend: 'You seem very fond of your life. May I ask, if not a rude question, how you came to enlist?'

'Oh, I don't mind telling you a bit. There's nothing very wonderful about it. It wasn't money, or the want of it—or love, or the want of that, that made me become a soldier. There's lots of chaps in our regiment as would have a pretty yarn to spin, if they were to set about telling you how they came to enlist. There's the son of a Sussex parson who was made a soldier through a young schoolmistress in his father's village. There's the

son of a noble Lord who joined ours because of the money-lenders or something of that sort. There's more than one who's taken the shilling because he's broken heads as well as hearts; and I daresay there's many of them did it because they didn't know any other way of keeping themselves straight than to bind themselves with the Queen's Regulations. But it wasn't so with me. I joined because I thought I'd like a soldier's life; and so I do. I was apprenticed to a firm of picture-engravers; and when I'd done my time, I found I'd grown so much bigger than every one else in the shop, that I thought I'd do something with my height like. Every one was obliged to look up to me, and I thought that I'd give them something worth looking at. I always liked the uniform, and I really think that that was the main reason I enlisted. At least, I don't know any other; and I don't repent my choice. I'm in for twelve years; and at the end of that time I shall only be thirty, quite young enough to take to my old trade, if I like. But I shall never have to do that; for I hope to be able to make a living by that time at these sort of things. I'm very fond of music too; I play the *piccolo properly*, and it'll be hard lines if I can't manage to get on at one if not both of these arts.'

Another surprise! Music must now be added to the accomplishments of this very accomplished trooper. He was getting almost beyond me; and dreading lest he should begin comparing the merits of Mozart and Mendelssohn, I brought my companion back to the subject of his sketches, two or three of which I bought of him.

As I rolled up my little purchase, my artist-musician Guardsman asked me what I thought of the position of affairs in Ireland. This was too much. I could not and would not add the craft of politics to the many endowments of this happy soldier's portrait; so I somewhat hastily left the bar and its brilliant temporary ornament.

JACQUES.

AN EPISODE OF '92.

BY DAVID CHRISTIE MURRAY.

CHAPTER I.

BROAD, bright, summer sunshine over the quaint old town of Vieuxchâtel; and broad, bright, summer sunshine pouring in a dazzling flood across the floor of a squalid chamber in the top-most flight of a house of seven stories. In the squalid room, one broken chair, one broken table, one tattered *paillasse*—from whose edges the straw peered raggedly—and broadcast on the floor one tattered human figure—a stalwart figure, and not unhandsome, in spite of rags; not unhandsome, in spite even of the signs of constant debauchery borne by the bearded face, or the premature gray sprinkled about the moustache and the untidy hair. Broad summer sunshine streaming full upon the sleeper's face failed to awake him; but his breath was stertorous and disturbed, and he moved and muttered often and uneasily. The man was evidently but the wreck of what he had been; but for all the drunken sleep, the signs of debauchery, the rags he wore, and the squalor of his abiding-place, there was still the touch of a better past about him. The pose of his figure was graceful; and his features, though their first clear-

ness of outline was lost, had still a trace of manly beauty.

It was not an early sunshine which poured into that lofty chamber. The early sunbeams, six hours ago, had touched the discoloured ceiling, and had stolen slowly lower and lower, until they now lay full upon the sleeper's face. As the sun mounted, and its light grew nearer to the edge of the bleared window, it revealed a scrap of paper, and on the scrap of paper a printed name, a name of terror in those days—MARAT. The scrap was crumpled, but from its topmost corner peeped the words 'Salut Public.' Beside it, but nearer the window, and still in shadow, lay the means employed in those days for the preservation of the public health, a carabine and a sabre, and between them a tattered Phrygian cap, misnamed 'of liberty.'

Whilst the sleeper stirred and muttered in his broken slumber, there came so loud a knocking at the door that he started upright, and with half-opened eyes stared about him in alarm; but in a moment severing reality and his dreams, he cried, with something of a rollicking, desperado air, to the knocker to enter. An old woman, with one heavy *sabot* in her hand, and the other upon her right foot, obeyed his order.

'You sleep too soundly for health, Citizen Jacques,' said she, leering at him, and shaking the *sabot* in her hand towards the door, to indicate that its application had been necessary to awake him. 'Brandy may be a very good doctor, but it is a bad bedfellow, Citizen.'

'What hour is it?' demanded the man sulkily.

'It is within an hour of mid-day,' the old woman responded; 'and you should have been away two hours ago to Pastal for Monsieur le Notary.' She dropped her heavy wooden *sabot* on the floor as she spoke, and set her foot in it. 'Come man, hurry!'

'Why so much noise?' said Jacques, more sulkily than ever. 'The notary will be in time.'

'It is an odd thing, Citizen,' said the old woman, with a look of malicious enjoyment in her eyes, 'that you, of all men, should be chosen for such an errand.'

Citizen Jacques turned upon her such a look, that the chuckle she had begun died upon her lips. She lowered her eyes, and muttering that she had other things to do than to waste her time there, she left the room in apparent discomfiture.

'Ay,' said Jacques, muttering to himself savagely, 'it is an odd thing. The Citizeness has reason. But I—what was I ever, but a *vaurien*, a fool? You have kicked over your basket, Alnaschar, and there is no market where they will buy the pieces.'

He shook himself together with the gesture a dog uses on leaving water, stuck the cap of liberty on his head with a rakish and defiant air, set his carabine and sabre in a corner of the room, and left the chamber, securing the door behind him. A single flight of stairs traversed downwards, brought him to the street; for though on one side the house was seven stories high, the hillside on which it was built rose so precipitately, that the rambling and picturesque building presented a frontage of one story only to the village road. The whole place drowsed in the strong, pure sunshine, and there

were but few people abroad. The village cobbler sat in his stall; the village woodcutter lazily plied his trade in a shady corner; the grocer lounged at his own door; and to each and all of these, as he passed, Citizen Jacques flung out a 'Good-day,' which had somehow a note of defiance in it. It was noticeable that cobbler and woodcutter and grocer all displayed something of a nervous alacrity in responding to the salutation; and that there was even a propitiatory air about each of them, and a propitiatory tone in the voice of each as they returned the bullying salutation.

The plain fact was that Citizen Jacques, little as he might look like it, was a power in the village. In those days, power lay within the grasp of any man unscrupulous enough to wield it. They were days when the reckless French wit conjugated the verb to suspect—'I am suspect, thou art suspect, he is suspect;' days when no man's life, however virtuous, honourable, patriotic he might be, was worth a minute's purchase, if any ragged and disreputable scoundrel thought it worth while to denounce him to the Committee of Public Safety. And ragged, drunken, and disreputable as he had grown, Jacques Lamballe was esteemed an honest patriot, and his word was weighty. The Republic suited Jacques, as it suited many another person of his type. There was no need for a good patriot to distress himself overmuch with work in those days. A patriot whose affection for his country was beyond dispute or cavil, might, without much difficulty, levy black-mail upon patriots of a type less pronounced. Jacques' wants were few and easily supplied. They were readily supplied also; for though as yet he had denounced nobody, he was pretty generally supposed to be ready to denounce anybody, and it was well to have a friend at court. Not a tongue in the whole wide land of France dare wag against the prodigious tyranny of that mad suspicion; not a head shake against it, for fear it should shake itself off into that grim red basket which lay at the feet of the great overworked national executioner.

But as Jacques walked along, credited by all who watched him with designs of village statecraft, he had no thought of the safety of the great Republic in his mind. 'You have reason, Citizeness,' he said to himself; 'it is an odd thing that I, of all men, should undertake our good Citizen Thurot's business in this matter. My handsome Camille shall be betrothed to-day. Eh well! But when shall my handsome Camille be married? You were scornful, pretty Marie, this three years since, when perhaps I was as good a match for you as handsome Camille himself; and the handsome Camille carries a head no safer on his shoulders than any other citizen of the good Republic, one and indivisible.—Behold me!' cried Citizen Jacques aloud, being clear by this time of the village street, and alone in the wide fields, with none in sight. 'What I am, Mademoiselle, you made me. I am not such a fool as not to know what I am, and I do not bear so poor a heart as to forgive you who spoiled me. And you, Monsieur le Capitaine, had your share in it. For who but you came between us? I was as handsome a man as you, my good Captain. I had better blood in me, if that were worth anything in these days of a good Republic, than ever ran in your veins. And now, see what I am become—a thing for myself to

loathe, and the dogs to bark at! But with this good Republic there come chances for everybody; chances even for *ce vaurien Jacques*. Oh, I know the name you give me, Citizens and Citizenesses. You shall go your ways, and that rascal Jacques will take his way; and we shall meet at the end of it, good people, and shall see who has prospered, you or I;' and Citizen Jacques walked on, apparently unsoothed by his own reflections.

The little village of Pastal lay a league before him in the pleasant sunshine. He walked on, muttering every now and then to himself, until he reached the outskirts of the village, when every one who met him offered, in spite of his ragged garb, a swift recognition of the surly salute he flung them as he passed. If anything, cobbler, woodcutter, and grocer in Pastal were a little more subservient to Citizen Jacques than their fellows in Vieuxchâtel had been; and the ragged rascal lounged through the little street like an ill-tempered monarch, nodding right and left to abject subjects. The notary's office being reached, Citizen Jacques rudely pushed open the door and entered, like one who had a right there.

'Citizen Notary,' said he, encountering Maître Brissot within the room he entered, 'your services are required at Vieuxchâtel;' and he sat down without doffing the Phrygian cap.

'Believe me, Citizen Jacques,' returned Maître Brissot, a keen-looking, spectacled old gentleman, with a rosy complexion and plump hands, 'you are less welcome than you would make it appear to yourself. Under the rule of our good Republic, a good Citizen's house is his own, my friend.'

'I am as welcome to your house,' responded Jacques, 'as you to my name, Citizen; and half a score of years ago, when I brought good business here, I was welcomer than I should care to be again.'

'Neither you nor your business,' said the notary, 'have been welcome here, Citizen Lamballe, since you took to the wild ways that followed your poor father's death, and would have broken his heart thrice over had he lived to see them.—But who,' he added hastily, as if to prevent his unwelcome visitor from responding, 'is in need of my services at Vieuxchâtel?'

'Oh,' said Jacques, with a somewhat sinister smile, 'I am turned Christian, Maître Brissot, and am doing good to them that spitefully used me. I carry a little message for an old rival of mine. The handsome Captain marches to-morrow, and must needs be betrothed before he goes; and old Thurot must needs choose me as his messenger for a notary. You may come as soon as you will. I had promised to bring you before noon, and it is noon already.'

The old notary regarded him keenly, and made as if he would have spoken; but turned away, and busied himself in stacking together and locking up a little pile of papers. 'And now,' he said, when his preparations were completed, 'I am at your service, Citizen Lamballe.'

The ragged Citizen led the way—the notary following closely at his heels—bestowing upon the village people, as if in intentional display of his powers, the same contemptuous recognition as before. That the man of law took note of his companion's manner, was evident; but he forbore to speak of it; and the two travelled in silence for half a league, till, being in the widespread fields

again, Jacques turned upon the lawyer with his evil smile. 'They will have a happy married life, do you think, Monsieur Brissot?' he said.

'My friend Lamballe,' returned the notary, 'I am free to say that I do not like your manner. Your errand is discharged, and we may as well say "Good-day."'

Jacques laughed. 'Do you think I would harm the pretty pair?'

The notary regarded him with much distrust, and pushing past him, stepped out rapidly; but his legs were no match for those of Jacques, who, with no apparent quickening of his stride, kept easy pace with him, looking down into the notary's keen yet good-humoured face with an expression of sardonic amusement.

At last, the little man made a decisive pause. 'Take your way, Citizen Lamballe, and I will take mine.'

'What!' cried Jacques, 'not to know that our ways are the same. With what decency could I let my old sweetheart be betrothed, and not be there?'

The notary was about to make a passionate reply, but checked himself, and pursued his way in silence, the ragged Citizen holding on by his side with the old sinister look of enjoyment. The house to which the lawyer had been summoned was that of a man but one remove from the better class of tradespeople. It was a small but comfortable-looking tenement, standing back a little from the road, and its front was covered with the broad leaves of the vine, and promising clusters of half-ripened grapes. Within the porch stood Citizen Thurot, a ripe, healthy, well-to-do personage of middle age, who, disregarding the ragged messenger, strode forth to meet the notary with outstretched hand.

'Aha, Maître Brissot,' he cried cheerfully, 'you are late. Our good Camille marches to-morrow to fight against those rascally Prussians, and must needs be betrothed before he goes. We have expected you this hour back. But better late than never.'

'Why, as for my being late,' returned the notary, 'you must thank your messenger, neighbour Thurot. As soon as I heard the news, I came.' As he spoke the words, he gave a backward wave of the hand to indicate Jacques; and M. Thurot turning for the first time towards that personage, regarded him with great disfavour, and plumping round, walked straight into the house, leaving the notary to follow. The man of law had taken the vagabond's promise to be present at the ceremony as nothing worse than a tasteless jest; and he was considerably surprised when Jacques pushed in before him, and entered the house at its proprietor's heels.

'I think, Citizen Lamballe,' said the notary, 'I am likely to be right in supposing that you have not been invited here.'

'I am going to ask for my letter of invitation now,' returned the vagabond; and he looked so grim, that the little notary, who had at first some idea of opposing his progress, thought better of it, and allowed him to pass in unmolested. 'Let the people of the house deal with him,' said Maître Brissot to himself.

'Your business, my friend?' said M. Thurot, facing round on Jacques as the latter entered.

'I am here,' returned Jacques, with great cool-

ness, 'as a friend of the family! I come to witness to-day's pretty little ceremony; and I am sure you will make my father's son welcome beneath your roof.'

'Your father's son,' cried the host angrily, 'is the one man of all others who ought to be welcome here; but'—

'So I thought,' interrupted Jacques calmly.

The old man broke out: 'Leave my house, and never dare to enter it again!'

'This is the way of the world!' cried Jacques, laughing hoarsely. 'An old friend comes in a blouse, and finds himself unknown; but *sabots* are a good disguise for feet that have sported diamond buckles in their time. I came here in friendship, Citizen Thurot.' He waved his hand and turned; when a young fellow in the dress of a Captain of dragoons entered from an adjoining room and took him by the arm.

'Nay, my father,' said the newcomer. 'If Citizen Lamballe would be one of us, let him stay, for old acquaintance' sake.—And I would fain, Jacques,' he continued, swaying the vagabond gently to and fro by the arm, 'that thou wouldst come with me and fight the enemies of our good Republic. Hast good fighting stuff in thee, man! Come, tell me, what sayest thou?'

'The Republic,' said Jacques darkly, 'has need of servants at home as well as abroad, in these times, and my place is here. But since you ask it, I will stay;' and without further speech he took his seat in a corner, with a smile of triumph directed towards the notary. The shot missed its mark, however; for the old man, with a sniff of very decided meaning, busied himself among his papers, and taking his seat at the table, awaited the advent of the bride. M. Thurot, with no pleased expression of countenance, left the room, returning after a moment's pause with his daughter Marie, a pretty and gentle-looking girl, who, casting one frightened look at Jacques, took her stand by the soldier's side. Two or three of the neighbours stood about the room, and one and all, by their looks, testified surprise at the presence of that ragged figure in the corner. Jacques, however, held his head high, and gave back the looks they lent him with an insolence more than proportionate. The ceremony—leisurely as the old notary went about his business—was soon over; and at its close, Jacques Lamballe resumed his feet, and addressing the newly betrothed soldier, asked with an air of banter: 'And whose corps do you join, my Captain?'

'I join Colonel des Moulins,' responded Camille.

'I had thought it was Colonel la Mort,' returned Jacques with a sinister laugh.

The bride seized her betrothed husband by the arm, with a look of terror at these words of evil omen.

'Take no heed of the scoundrel!' cried old Thurot.

Jacques gave one twirl of the Phrygian cap. 'You are good patriots all,' he said mockingly, 'and I have the honour to bid you good-day.'

As he disappeared, the betrothal party looked at each other with uneasy glances. They were days when even a breath of suspicion might be fatal to the bravest, the best, and the fairest; and all hearts there had read a threat in the swaggering *vaurien's* tone.

CHAPTER II.

The great French Republic contrived in the course of its brief life to change a good many things; but there are matters which are happily beyond the meddling of even a great Republic. The month of Thermidor was recognisable as a French July, notwithstanding its change of name; and in spite of the amazing throes of terror that shook the whole land of France, it was noticeable that July was still acceptable as a pleasant kind of month to make love in. Even in Paris, where, during that awful time the common sewers ran blood, and La Guillotine accounted for scores of victims every day, there were the same old episodes of love with which Phyllis and Corydon were familiar in many leafy Arcadias. A wise man remarks that Nature returns again, though expelled by a pitchfork. In France, in the year 1793 of the Christian era, and the year 2 of the new reign of Liberty and Brotherhood, poor Nature was expelled by a forest of pikes, and kicked out by innumerable blood-stained *sabots*. Yet she returned again; and in the light of her presence, young hearts loved, and young hope gaily fluttered above them—quite in the old way. And if that were so even in that terrible capital and within the very sound of the dread tumbrils, you may be sure that in quiet country places, lovers could now and then find a happy breathing space in the pauses of political and social agonies.

It was not an English lane down which the lovers walked, nor had it an English lane's calm and sequestered beauty; but it had charms of its own, with which they were fully content, and more familiar. For long miles before them, the road ran straight as an arrow, and on each side rose an endless line of tall, gaunt poplars. Between the tree-trunks on one side, the lovers saw an opulent country, smiling with corn and vine; and between the tree-trunks on the other, the summits of the Alps, with eternal snows gleaming white in the sunshine.

Handsome Camille deserved the name the common tongue had given him; and Marie Thurot was more than pretty and engaging enough to justify the fond admiration her lover's glance expressed as he looked downward to the face that nestled at his side. The freedom allotted to any engaged young couple in France, was then, as now, much more circumscribed than it would be in England; but in a quiet little border village like Vieuxchâtel, it was scarcely regarded as a breach of the *convenances* to allow a newly betrothed pair who were to part within four-and-twenty hours of their betrothal, a few unrestricted moments to themselves. And so Camille and Marie were for a little while alone; and in spite of the forebodings which the girl's gentle heart could not resist, they were happier, almost, than they knew. For at such a time it is natural to lovers to think themselves unblest, though there comes a time in life when even lovers' partings are pleasant to remember; only less pleasant, perhaps, than lovers' meetings. Camille spoke of the future hopefully, like a lover, and a soldier of fortune and of the great Republic.

'Colonel des Moulins is my good friend, Marie; and so is General Lebrun. After the engagement at Spitzberg, the General shook hands with me in presence of the staff, and prophesied my rise.'

'But when shall you return, Camille?' asked Marie.

'When the enemies of the Republic are defeated,' returned the young soldier gaily.

'Not till then?' said the girl, clinging with both hands to his arm.

'Why, child,' said the soldier, 'you speak as though that were a work of ages. France will drive this horde of *canaille* before her as the wind drives dust.'

She believed him; but, maiden-like, she had her forebodings. 'But, Camille,' she began, 'people are killed in war sometimes!'

'That is not uncommon,' said Camille drily. But a moment later he burst into a merry laugh, and threw both arms around her. 'Thou art a soldier's bride, sweet child,' he said, 'and must send away thy betrothed with merrier music than a funeral-march in his ears.'

'I will try to be brave,' she answered. 'But oh! it is hard, it is hard, to part!'

'And no less for me than for thee,' said Camille. 'A stout heart, my child!' And what with her tremulous joy at his caresses, and her fears for his future, the tears filled her eyes; and Camille, with the corner of her muslin kerchief, dried them.

The sound of heavy footsteps on the firm road startled the girl from the young soldier's embrace; and Camille, turning, beheld three figures in *sabots*, blouses, and caps of liberty, marching rapidly towards them. He drew Marie's arm through his own and walked on, suspecting and fearing nothing.

'Halte là!' shouted the hoarse voice of Jacques Lamballe.

The soldier's blood tingled for a second or two at the fellow's insolence; but still, suspecting nothing, and fearing nothing, he walked slowly on, with Marie's arm through his.

'In the name of the Republic, halt!' cried the harsh voice behind; and at this the soldier turned haughtily, and faced the rough trio who followed. Jacques, who was in advance, came on with a smile, in which perhaps an observant physiognomist might have found a touch of shame and compunction, and a good deal of that swaggering insolence which in half-brutalised natures is often employed to beat shame and compunction down.

'What would you with me, Jacques Lamballe?' demanded Camille.

'Citizen Camille Piquet, late Captain in the service of the Republic'—began Jacques, reading from an official paper which he carried in his hand.

'Late Captain? Insolent!' broke in the soldier.

'You are denounced,' Jacques went on, his ugly smile a little broader than before, 'as a traitor to the Republic, and a correspondent with the English Pitt; and are summoned now to appear before the Committee of Public Safety at the Hôtel de Ville of Vieuxchâtel. Surrender your sword.'

The soldier looked slowly from one captor to another. His hand was on his sword-hilt, and his heart was full of sudden desperation. But in the tricolor sash each man wore, there hung a brace of pistols, and each carried a carbine in his hands. He recognised at once the impossibility and the impolicy of resistance. He undid the buckle of his sword-belt with lingering fingers,

eyeing Jacques sternly the while. The messenger of the great Republic would fain have swaggered through with his task; but before that terrible gaze the insolent smile which creased his features died, and his eyes sought the ground. Marie was clinging to her sweetheart with tears and cries.

'Tush, tush, child!' he said gently, but without turning. 'This folly will be over in an hour. The Republic knows its friends.' He stretched out his right hand with the sword depending loosely from its belt, and stood, awaiting the command of his captors. Jacques seized the sword.

'Pierre—to the prisoner's left. Jean—to the rear. March!' he cried. And, with heavy clasp of sabots, the three marched with their prisoner along the firm summer road towards the village; and Marie, with trembling feet that scarcely obeyed her will, followed them.

SOME QUEER DISHES.

BY DR ARTHUR STRADLING.

PART II.

THE insect world does not yield mankind much in the shape of provender. Locusts, often as thick as one's finger and from two to three inches long, are brayed into a mash with cold water, and eaten with olives in Syria and other parts of the East, in return for the depredations which they commit. John the Baptist lived for a time on locusts and wild honey; and locusts are still used as food in Palestine to this day, the Mosaic law (Lev. xi.) classifying them as clean and lawful to be eaten. In the Weald of Kent, children eat a certain caterpillar when they spy one in the hedges, calling them 'raspberry jams;' they seem to occur in the autumn, or I suppose feed on some particular leaf at that period of the year. The *bonne bouche* is said to exactly resemble the conserve from which they derive their vernacular name, but I never tried one.

Would you eat a reptile? You shudder at the very thought. But what about turtle-soup? This is the only culinary form in which we are familiar with the reptile in England; but on the coast of the Spanish Main, where they are very abundant, and sometimes weigh six or eight hundred pounds apiece, they constitute a standard article of diet with all classes, and turtle-fin, turtle-steak, cutlets of turtle, turtle-pie, stewed, boiled, curried and devilled turtle are found in every house. The choicest Antigua turtle—reputed the best—may be purchased alive and in sound condition at the rate of about three-halfpence per pound-weight—speared ones, which will not live long, for less. In San Juan del Norte, on the coast of Nicaragua, I once had nothing but turtle for four days, and grew to weary of it, long before the time had expired. Sometimes one buys a beautiful fat 'fish,' sound and heavy, which defrauds its purchaser presently by laying fifty or sixty eggs and reducing its weight by about two-thirds. These turtle-eggs are separate and about the size of a hen's, but the shell is soft and membranous and they are nearly globular in shape; the contents, very rich and delicious when boiled or roasted, do not coagulate by heat. I have tasted alligators' eggs, too, but there is a nauseous musky

odour and flavour about them, as there is with the flesh of the reptile itself. Iguanas' eggs are better, but much smaller. Singular to say, the eggs of the ostrich are not at all bad eating, not coarser or stronger to the palate than an ordinary duck's egg.

Next to turtle, perhaps the frog is the best-known edible reptile in Europe. France is, of course, popularly supposed to be *par excellence* the land of frog-eaters, but I doubt it very much. I have tried often in many of the seaport towns to get hold of them, but in vain; and I know that in Paris a dish of dressed frogs is as difficult to obtain, and as expensive as the rarest viands from foreign countries. They may, however, be bought in the fish-market by St Sulpice, and are occasionally exposed for sale in the market of the Faubourg St-Germain. There are many other edible frogs besides the somewhat arbitrarily named *Rana esculenta*. Many a good feed have I had off the hind-quarters—as big as chicken-legs—of the huge striped Dominica frog; and in the Zoological Gardens may be seen some large frogs, not yet identified, which I brought home the other day from Buenos Ayres, having rescued them from the spit in the open market-place. The true iguana or tuberculated lizard—scientifically *Iguana tuberculata*—is the most savoury of its order, and the best adapted for the table, especially if curried or fricasséed. It is a brilliant green creature, ranging from three to five feet in length inclusive of its whip-like tail. It is incredibly swift in running and climbing, and feeds on fruit and vegetables.

There is another edible lizard (*Teius teguexin*) of a dark-brown or black colour mottled with gray and yellow, and living on insects, eggs and small animals, which is also sometimes called iguana in common parlance.

The flesh of the iguana is very delicate, though I scarcely thought so the first time I ate it. It happened in this wise. The ship in which I was stationed was lying for some days at Carthage, where I was introduced to a man who had just acquired one of the small but exquisitely beautiful islands with which the lagoon is filled; he had found a spring of fresh water there, and had just commenced to clear the jungle with which it was covered. Knowing my mania for reptiles, he offered to send me down in a canoe and give me a long day's snake-hunting there—an offer which I eagerly accepted, and was ready at dawn next morning with my net, bag, and other paraphernalia. But the day wore on without any sign of the canoe, and when it at length arrived late in the afternoon there was barely time to reach the island before nightfall, and the Indians to whom I was intrusted declared they must return to the city the same evening. However, I was determined not to be done out of my trip, so, hearing that such shelter as four upright bamboos supporting a mat of dried palm-leaves could afford already existed there, I added a blanket and something in a small bottle to my equipment, and arranged that my dusky boatmen should leave me on the island all night and return for me the next afternoon. With this understanding they paddled me down, and then bade me 'Adios.'

I didn't find it at all lonely that night—far from it. I believe every winged and creeping abomination that earth produces visited me in those hours of darkness, and had some of me. When I

got up next morning—that is, if the blistered, bloodless residue that emerged from the blanket was sufficient to be dignified with the first personal pronoun—the thought flashed across me that I had missed my dinner the night before, and had no prospect of breakfast where I stood. I was undeniably hungry, but comforting myself with the reflection that I could avenge my appetite on board the ship that evening, I started in quest of snakes, and so passed a fearfully hot but far from unpleasant or unprofitable day. But when night began to settle down again, and no boat was to be seen, I commenced to realise my position. I had now been nearly thirty-six hours without food, and having undergone considerable fatigue, was beginning to experience sundry evidences of my head and stomach ‘failing to connect,’ as Yankees say, and that my legs were setting up an independent volition of their own. My friend had established a colony of turkeys and fowls on his island, but though I kept on calling ‘Cup, cup, cup!’ in the most approved manner, I couldn’t catch one. There was abundance of game, too, but I had no gun; and my search for victuals in all directions round the clearing was rewarded only by the discovery of an earthen pipkin full of some native liqueur—a sort of coarse anisado. Of this I drank a quantity before lying down, and thanks to this and a wood-fire which I kindled, was enabled to pass my second night in comparative tranquillity.

By morning, all my hunger had vanished, but I felt that something graver was taking its place; so I set about in serious earnest to consider what I should eat. It was almost my first voyage to the tropics, and I knew nothing of the nature of the vegetation around me—how to discriminate between poisonous and innocuous roots, fruits, and berries. I tried to trap some crabs, but without success; and my snakes were so small that—Stay! I had noosed two fine iguanas the day before, and had tied them with a running loop to one of the bamboo poles. They had taken refuge on the palm thatch, but to pull them down was the work of a moment, though I got a nasty cut across the cheek from the sharp ridged tail of one of them in doing so. I chopped its head off, skinned it, cleaned it, ‘broiled’ it—that is, held it over my fire till it got smoked and smutty—and ate it; but even under those circumstances it wasn’t nice. What the palate did not approve of, however, the inner man did; and I felt so much better after my meal, that I not only killed and ate the other, but noosed three more into the bargain, which I served in the same way—for the whole of that day and a great part of another passed away before relief arrived.

I was lying down in the afternoon, thinking solemnly of Robinson Crusoe and wondering why he did not eat his goat, when I heard a canoe ground on the beach, and rushing out met my friend, the owner of the now detested isle, and his peccant Indians, who had been drunk and had forgotten all about me, jumping ashore. I went back that night, of course, and before I left, the Indians made a *sancocho* for me—a favourite dish of theirs, consisting of turkey, fowl, jerked beef, yam, plantain, and green maize—pronounced ‘mice’—boiled together in a big pot and eaten with *tortillas*, thin crisp cakes of manioc flour, spread and baked on a flat stone—

the most delightful repast I ever enjoyed, as may be readily imagined.

Perhaps the last thing in the world that most people would choose for a meal is a snake; nevertheless, they are eaten in some parts of the world. The Kafir and Hottentot devour pythons and even puff-adders and other poisonous species, while the Bushman goes still further, not only eating the snakes themselves, but the flesh of animals which his arrows tipped with the serpents’ venom have brought down. Sir T. Mitchell tells us that the Australian natives are also snake-eaters; and M. Palizot-Beauvois relates that in Kaskaskia—a town on the banks of the Mississippi—he was invited to partake of ‘Musical Jack,’ which proved on investigation to be fried rattlesnakes, decapitated and skinned, and showing a meat as firm and white as chicken. ‘Musical Jack’ was a standard dish in that snake-infested region. Even the Spaniards during their occupation of Louisiana grew accustomed to consider this most venomous reptile a welcome adjunct to their diet, and it is said that the officers in garrison at Fort Adam used to give large sums for the fattest and biggest rattlesnakes which the soldiers caught. In certain districts of France and the Black Forest, a *tisane* or broth of vipers is still held to be a specific for gout and scrofulous affections; and the famous physician, Dr Meade, writing in 1745, recommends powder of dried vipers, viper lozenges, viper-broth and jelly, the flesh of boiled vipers, and ‘viperine salt’ dissolved in wine, for lepra and other cutaneous eruptions. I have eaten the big French viper—*Vipera aspis*, a different species from our own British adder, which, however, exists plentifully on the continent under the name of the ‘little viper’—and Anaconda as well, but remember nothing very distinctive about either.

In this Age of Tin we need not go far afield in search of strange food; all manner of outlandish things are now preserved and sent home to our own doors. The grocer can now supply us with Australian beef and mutton; and kangaroo soup and other foreign delicacies lie on his shelves side by side with Paysandu ox-tongues and Liebig’s Extract from Fraybentos.

I see that tinned pepper-pot is now to be obtained in London, but cannot fancy that it would be much like the real article. Pepper-pot is a favourite relish for breakfast out West, and is eaten with rice like curry; in some of the old families in Demerara it is made to perfection. An iron crock is filled up daily with scraps of meat, fish, almost anything, and various spices, peppers, chillies and other condiments added, the essential one being *casaripe*, a thick, black, treacly fluid extracted from the cassava root. The crock itself is brought to the breakfast-table, and the contents served with a wooden spoon; the mixture is black and fibrous in appearance and intensely hot to the palate, but the *sine quâ non* of excellence in a pepper-pot is that it shall never be allowed to become empty. The quantity it holds is immensely disproportionate to that required for daily consumption—nevertheless, it is filled up every morning, and kept perpetually simmering.

The other day a steamer brought to Bordeaux some joints of antelope, giraffe, hippopotamus and porcupine preserved in ice from the coast of Africa,

destined for a banquet given by an eccentric millionaire in the capital; and Herr Hugo von Koppenfels, the African explorer, now on travel, writes to say that in the rivers about the Gaboon the manatee is hunted for the sake of its flesh to such an extent that before long it will probably become extinct.

But are there no products of sea or land at home which are excluded without reason from our list of food supplies? Certain seaweeds yield a wholesome and nutritious jelly; many fish and molluscs are pronounced uneatable which contain nothing injurious to health, or offensive to the eye or palate; and it is possible that our woods and meadows might afford many herbs and roots capable of being cooked into something more attractive than the mess of boiled watercress and cucumber which cottagers eat in Somersetshire. An infusion of the young leaves of the sloe-bush dried, well known as an adulteration of tea, is by no means a bad substitute for that beverage. With regard to the representatives of our fauna of which I can speak from exceptional gastronomic experience, I may say that I found sea-gull and otter very bitter and fishy; mole and mouse slightly disagreeable, but almost tasteless; squirrel and rat fairly good, and hedgehog remarkably so.

Gipsies are the people for hedgehogs. They have dogs trained for the purpose of catching them, and start on their expeditions at dusk, returning at daybreak with their prickly spoil, after a tramp of many miles perhaps, through the country-side. No doubt the dogs are scientifically trained, and there may be other things besides hedgehogs, in the bag, when it reaches the encampment on the common in the morning. The first I ever tasted I saw cooked outside a gipsy tent, where I squatted on the grass and watched the whole operation. It was killed by a blow on the head; not cut at all, but unrolled and wrapped in a mass of clay, and deposited in a little pit full of hot ashes. Then the fire was piled on the top of this, and in about half-an-hour the roast was announced to be ready. Piggy was disinterred from the ashes and his earthen envelope, now baked hard, broken open; to this the skin adhered, while the 'inside' came out in one lump when a suitable incision was made. My first impressions were certainly favourable, but they were more than confirmed afterwards, when a kind-hearted farmer's wife, hearing of my predilection, dressed several hedgehogs for my special behoof in different ways. We unanimously decided that it was best judged after the manner of a hare, and it has a really characteristic gamey flavour about it.

One observes that most of the out-of-the-way things that have been eaten are recorded by the experimenter as 'greatly resembling chicken in flavour,' or veal—which is somewhat tantamount to saying they have no flavour at all; but in point of fact it is difficult to draw the line honestly between two extremes. When a man has mustered courage enough to eat an unfamiliar article, he does not like to confess afterwards that it was anything but good; but according to my experience, one rarely has the opportunity of a fair test, because one has almost invariably to cook for one's self. No one else, servants included, will touch the things. Rats, for instance, I firmly believe, would be not only wholesome, but very

nice if properly prepared—not common sewer rats, but such as I ate, barn-fed animals snared in a hop-garden. The flesh, though perfectly white, was dry and tasteless; but then they were only skinned, cleaned, and submitted to the fire without any of the etceteras which make other meats savoury. Dr Kane, Rear-Admiral Beaufort, Captain Inglefield, and other arctic explorers speak highly of rats as a welcome addition to their supply of food in those dreary latitudes.

LEGENDS OF THE ENGLISH LAKES.

IN addition to the beauties of the scenery, the Lake District possesses an especial interest in the numerous tales and legends associated with almost every height and *how*, every lake and *ghyll*. The very names given to them recall to our minds the times of our Scandinavian forefathers. For instance, Silver How at Grasmere is the Hill of Sölvar, and Butterliphow is the Mound of Buthar, surnamed Lepr the Nimble. Windermere, Buttermere, and Elterwater are the meres and water called after the ancient Norsemen Windar, Buthar or Butar, and Eldir.

The belief that these hardy sea-kings selected the mountain-tops for their burial-places, suggests the theme of many a poetic legend; and the fancy still exists that they revisit the place of their sepulture, and make their presence known by musical tones, as of unearthly harps touched by no mortal hands. One of these legends, called 'Sölvar How,' tells how the beautiful 'Dagmar the Dane' on her white steed was allured:

With the firstlings and yearlings, from hill-top and hollow,
Gathering far, the sweet voice of the Phantom to follow—
To them sweeter than murmur of fountain and rill.

The Princess was favoured with a vision of the Phantom 'in all his bright beauty;' and when he left the hill-top which overlooks the placid lake of Grasmere, she followed him—

To hear his wild songs all alone;
And to chase from his lips every accent of sorrow,
As they walked through the dawn of a brighter to-morrow
Into sunlight that heaven upon earth never beamed.

Deaf to her hapless father's entreaties that she would return to his tower at Skelwith, she fled over hollow and hill till they reached the deep chasm of Dungeon Ghyll. Softly the shade glided over; and though some huge rocks falling with a crash, bridged over the gulf, the maiden in vain stretched out an imploring hand. The shade was gone. And

In her bower and in hall there was wailing and sorrow,
And the hills shone renewed with each glorious to-morrow,
But their bright star, their Dagmar, they knew not again.

Equally pathetic is the story of Ermengarde, connected with St Herbert's Isle, on Derwentwater. She had made some tapestry for the altar of St Herbert's Chapel, and rose on Mayday with her love divided between God and the saint. An Elfman

who was passing Ermengarde's window told her she might have her Mayday wish fulfilled if she would ask the two fishes of Bowscale Tarn for 'two tiny scales, of gold and pearly whiteness,' and place them on her heart. But alas! when she placed them in her bosom, the link which secured round her neck the 'simple cross' her mother had given her, was broken. Her thoughts too fondly set on the 'bright angelic air' of the saint, she wandered down Greta's side, and staying for a moment's glance at herself, 'before she looked on him'—

Its broken link dissevering,
Her little cross fell sinking slow
Beyond her vain endeavouring.

And then having her in their power,

From the stream two fin-like arms
Leapt up and snatched her wailing,
And dragged her down with all her charms
In anguish unavailing.

The story runs that the misguided maiden is not wholly lost, but waits till

Some bard shall wander by
With harp and song so holy,
That they shall wrench the caves where lie
Her limbs in anguish lowly.

Bowscale Tarn is a little north-east of Blencathra, now called Saddleback. It has long been a tradition in that country-side that it contains two immortal fish. Lord Clifford, 'the Shepherd Lord,' is said to have held intercourse with them, and had authority over them. Readers of the classics will recollect that Martial mentions some fishes in a lake at Baïæ, in Campania, which were consecrated to Domitian, and knew their master.

Bede, in his *History of the Church of England*, gives a beautiful description of the friendship between St Herbert and St Cuthbert of Farn Isle. When St Cuthbert was near his end, his 'brother Herbert' implored him to pray that they might 'depart hence into heaven together.' And the prayer was granted. In death, they 'were not divided'—on the same day their souls departed from their bodies, and were straight in union in beatific sight and vision.' This was in 687 A.D.; and as late as 1374 we find that the hermit's little oratory or chapel was resorted to in memory of his death, with services and processions. Forty days' indulgence was granted to all those who were present at the mass celebrated by the Vicar of Crosthwaite on the anniversary day.

The story of 'The Cuckoo in Borrowdale' is of a more laughable kind, and a fair specimen of the tales told about those good folks; of whom Mr James Payn says, 'they are the very simplest in the world, their language the broadest, and their notions the narrowest.' Living in their dreary valleys, the Spring was a great joy to the simple dalesmen, and the voice of its harbinger a most welcome sound.

'Tis the cuckoo! In the hollow
Up the valley seemed to follow
Spring's fair footsteps that sweet throat.
All the fields put off their sadness;
Trees and hills and skies with gladness
Answering to the cuckoo's note.

It occurred to the natives, that if they built a wall across the entrance to the valley, they might keep the cuckoo within its bounds, and so insure perpetual spring. But, sad to say, when June came and passed, with it passed away the 'inde-fatigable' bird—

While in stupor and amazement,
Vacantly, from cope to basement,
Glowering at their wall, they stood.

The ingenious plan had failed; but 'only because, according to popular belief, from generation to generation, the wall was not built one course higher.' After this, we are not surprised to find that 'the inhabitants of Borrowdale were a proverb, even among their unpolished neighbours, for ignorance.' A similar story is also told of the foolish community known as 'the wise men of Gotham.' Many more or less improbable stories are told of their simplicity, such as mistaking a red-deer for a horned horse, and a mule for a peacock!

'The Tale of the Stirrups,' says Mr J. P. White, in his *Lays and Legends of the English Lake Country*, 'is perhaps a little too absurd even for Borrowdale. A "statesman" brought home from a distant fair or sale what had never before been seen in the dale—a pair of stirrups. Riding home in them, when he reached his own door his feet had become so fastened in them that they could not be got out; so, as there was no help for it, he patiently sat his horse in the pasture for a day or two, his family bringing him food. Then it was proposed to bring them both into the stable, which was done, his family bringing him food as before. At length, it occurred to some one that he might be lifted with the saddle from the horse, and carried thereupon into the house. There the mounted man sat spinning wool in a corner of the kitchen till the return of one of his sons from St Bees' School, whose learning, after due consideration of the case, suggested that the good man should draw his feet out of his shoes; when, to the joy of his family, he was restored to his occupation and to liberty.'

Those who care to study the dialect of Cumberland and Westmoreland will find instruction and amusement combined in Mr Richardson's *Cumberland Talk*, in Dr Alexander Craig Gibson's *Laal Dinah Grayson, &c.*, and in Mr Dickenson's *Cumbrianiana*. The following anecdote from a paper of Dr Gibson's on the 'Ethnology of the Lakes' will serve as a specimen of the dialect: 'I was walking up the pleasant little village of Branthwaite, and came upon an old-lady villager pottering over something or other in the gutter near her house. Wishing to propitiate her, I remarked that there had been a good deal of rain in the night, for the river was swollen. "We co' it a beek," said she very snappishly; and turning her back upon me, called out to her grand-daughter "to bring oot t' scapple." And I, with some deference of tone, asked simply, "What may a scapple be?" when the girl came out with a small coal-rake, to which the old dame pointed, saying, "Whè, that's what a scapple may be!" And as I moved away rather sheepishly, I heard her call across the road to a neighbour: "I doon't know whoar t' doctor's been browte up—he co's t' beek a river, an' doesn't know what a scapple is."

In conclusion, we would commend to our readers' perusal Mr White's *Lays and Legends of the English*

Lake Country, from the poetical portion of which we have given several quotations above; and Mr James Payn's *Lakes in Sunshine*, one of the most charming works on Lakeland ever written.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN ON THE USE OF OIL
AT SEA.

Dr Benjamin Franklin was a believer in what has been frequently pointed out in this *Journal*, namely, the power of oil to still the agitation of water, and he records several experiments at the ground of his belief. In a letter to Dr Brownrigg in 1773, he mentions that in 1757 he observed the wakes of two ships to be remarkably smooth, while the wakes of all the others were ruffled by the wind, which blew fresh. The captain of Franklin's ship explained this by supposing that the cooks of the two ships had been emptying their greasy water through the scuppers. He was informed by fellow-passengers that the Bermudians when they would strike fish, the Lisbon fishermen when the surf was high on the bar, and Mediterranean divers when the ruffling of the water cut off their light below, were accustomed to use oil to procure a still surface. These instances, however, were hearsay.

The philosopher himself tested the power of oil to smooth water on the pond on Clapham Common, where a teaspoonful of oil, poured on the windward side, produced an instant calm over a space several yards square, and spread until it reached the lee side, 'making all that quarter of the pond, perhaps half an acre, as smooth as a looking-glass.' He states that he repeated the experiment in the country as opportunity offered, and found it constantly to succeed. Two other corroborative hearsay illustrations are mentioned by Franklin. One was, that Sir John Pringle learned in Scotland that herring-fishers could see at a distance where shoals of herring were by the smoothness of the water over them; the supposition being that some oiliness proceeded from the bodies of the herrings. The other story was that the harbour of Newport, Rhode Island, was observed to be always smooth while any whaling-vessels were in it. Franklin goes on to say that he showed his experiment to Count Bentinck of Holland, his son Captain Bentinck, and Professor Allemand, on 'a large piece of water at the head of the Green Park;' and that the Count said he had received a letter from Batavia relative to the saving of a Dutch ship in a storm by pouring oil into the sea. Subsequently, Franklin, with Captain Bentinck and some friends, tested the efficacy of oil on the surf at Portsmouth, by pouring some oil into the sea half a mile from the shore, on a windy day. The experiment was but partially successful, since no material difference was observed in the height or force of the surf upon the shore; but there was a long tract of smoothed, not level water; 'and a wherry, on her way to Portsmouth, seemed to turn into that tract of choice, and to use it from end to end, as a piece of turnpike road.' Franklin accounted for the want of complete success in this instance, by conjecturing that the mechanical force of the waves already raised by the wind must go on until exhausted, as a pendulum continues to swing after the original impulse has been withdrawn. He held, however, that the oil diminished the action of the wind on the waves already raised,

and that it prevented the wind from raising new waves. He seems to accept Pliny's statement, that the seamen of his time stilled the waves by pouring oil into the sea; and he adds: 'It has been of late too much the mode to slight the learning of the ancients. The learned, too, are apt to slight too much the knowledge of the vulgar. The cooling by evaporation was long an instance of the latter. This art of smoothing the waves by oil is an instance of both.'

DAY - DREAMS.

WHERE o'er the network of the trees
A fleecy cloud slow drifts o'er drowsy skies;
Where love-lorn sighs the languid breeze,
And drooping dies in minor melodies,
Among grass-hidden violets and thyme,
I weary listless lie, low murr'ring some old rhyme.

Soft languors through the pulses creep,
Whilst idle dreams flit in dim purple shade;
E'en love-sick Pan lies stretched asleep
This noon, methinks, in cool Arcadian glade:
Silent are shepherds' pipes on hill and vale,
Silent the river slowly winds adown the dale.

What is 't darts down the startled air,
Flashing with gold and gems of lustrous light?
Excalibur, sword strong and fair,
'Tis surely whirling swift through moonlit night—
That last weird night of Arthur. Nay! a ray
Pierces a deep dim nook hid far from the garish day.

But soft! The mad Ophelia sings,
With straws and flowers all tangled in her hair—
How sad, yet sweet, that strain upsprings
And wings its way upon the list'ning air—
'Will he not come again?' Away, away!
A distant wood-dove 'tis, cooing on leafy spray.

Yet heard you not the tearful tone
Of 'Willow, willow,' 'neath yon drooping tree,
Where Desdemona sits alone,
Her weary head low bowed o'er her knee?
Ah, no! 'Tis but a few faint notes a bird
Pipes feebly forth, as if by some sweet memory
stirred.

Now o'er the quaint old German street
The loit'ring shadows scarcely seem to steal,
And merry sings meek Margaret,
At work beside her whirling spinning-wheel,
A ballad of the King of Thule gay—
Thou dreamer! 'tis a stream that babbles on its way.

Away! thou sweet delusive dream,
That faintly flits before the half-shut eye,
Where, mingling with the flowers, there gleam
Strange elf-like forms begot of Phantasy.
Peas-blossom, Puck, ye tuneless fairy bowers!
Life's flower is too short-lived to waste with you the
hours.

Yet stay! that ye—like silver light
Trembling amid the shimmering summer rain—
To quiv'ring lips and sad eyes bright
With brimming unshed tears of silent pain,
A distant glimpse of sunshine still may bring,
Which, cheering weary wayworn hearts, may bid
them sing.

P. M. CAMPBELL.

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